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Parzival by Frater Achad (Continued from page 15)

And then Parzival learns from Gurnemanz that he at last nears the end of his Quest, for he is already within the Grail's Domain. He learns, too, of the anguish that has been suffered by Amfortas during his absence, and how the Knights had been disbanded because Amfortas no longer dared to unveil the Holy Cup. How Titurel, Father and Founder of the Order, had died—as other men—when he no longer received the Grail's enlivening beams.

So Parzival, in intense grief, bemoans his foolish wanderings that seem to have caused such disastrous results through his delay in returning to Monsalvat on his mission of mercy.

But things could not have been otherwise. We should remember how NEMO tended his garden and how some of the roots withered in anguish under the acid or the knife, while others flourished by means of the oil.

Had his Understanding not been Pure Darkness, his conscious mind would never have allowed him to complete his Work. But such is the Mystery of Redemption that these things must be in order that the final outcome may be perfect.

Sorrow and suffering are great teachers, and the Masters, having no personal ends to accomplish, are often the Instruments whereby our Karma comes upon us. As pointed out in Liber IV.:

"The contemplation of the Universe must be at first almost pure anguish. It is this fact which is responsible for most of the speculations of philosophy.

Mediaeval philosophers went hopelessly astray because their theology necessitated the reference of all things to the standard of man's welfare. . . .

The Ego-Idea must be ruthlessly rooted out before Understanding can be attained.

There is an apparent contradiction between this attitude and that of the Master of the Temple. What can possibly be more selfish than this interpretation of everything as a dealing of God with the soul?

But it is God who is all and not any part; and every "dealing" must thus be an expansion of the soul, a destruction of its separateness.

Every ray of the sun expands the flower.

The surface of the water in the Magic Cup is infinite; there is no point different from any other point.

Thus, ultimately, as the wand (spear) is a binding and a limitation, so is the Cup an expansion—into the Infinite.

And this is the danger of the Cup; it must necessarily be open to all, and yet if anything is put into it which is out of proportion, unbalanced, or impure, it takes hurt.

But—"Ultimately the Magical Will so identifies itself with the man's whole being that it becomes unconscious, and is as constant a force as gravitation."

Thus had the Spear—The Magical Will—led Parzival back to the Grail.

But, after his long Quest, Parzival is weak and fainting, and this final temptation—the idea that after all he has FAILED in the Quest—causes him to sink down helplessly upon the grassy knoll.

Kundry has brought a basin of Water

with which to sprinkle Parzival, but Gurnemanz, waving her off, says:

Not so!

The holy fount itself

Befiteth more our pilgrim's bath. And so, by the side of the Holy Spring (The Waters of the Great Sea—AK-SHARA) they remove the greaves from his legs (giving him further freedom of action) and bathe his feet (Symbol of Understanding). They then remove his corset (thus disclosing his Heart) and sprinkle him with the holy water.

For there are Three that bear witness on Earth—The Water, the Blood and the Holy Ghost (the Dove) and he that overcometh shall partake of the Waters of Life freely.

Upon the completion of Kundry's self-imposed task of bathing the feet of Parzival, he asks gently but wearily: "Shall I straight be guided unto Amfortas?" To which question Gurnemanz, whilst busy himself, replies:

Most surely; there the Court now coming waits.

He explains further that even he has been summoned to this Reception into, upon the death of Titurel, the long neglected office of the uncovering of the Grail is, by the will of Amfortas, once more to be performed.

We should notice how, apparently by chance—for so seems the Design of the Universal Initiation of Humanity—all things have been prepared and are seen to lead up to the Crowning point of the Ceremony.

Meanwhile, Parzival sits wondering at the marked change in Kundry, at her now humble attitude, so different from her former perversity; while Gurnemanz performs a further office in the ceremony of Purification by sprinkling the head of Parzival with water from the Holy Spring.

Purification being complete, is followed by Consecration, the second step towards Initiation. Kundry is seen to take a golden flask from her bosom and to pour some of its contents upon Parzival's feet. Taking the flask from her, Parzival then invites Gurnemanz to anoint his head with the same Holy Oil; his now clear vision causing him to remark:

"For I today as king shall be appointed."

He makes this statement, which is as less than a prophecy of his complete attainment, as simply and naturally as a child.

A few remarks should now be made as to the nature of this Holy Oil and in regard to the source from whence it came. Liber IV will again supply the key, for therein we read: "The Holy Oil is the Aspiration of the Magician, it is that which consecrates him to the performance of the Great Work. . . . It is not the will of the Magician, the desire of the lower to reach the higher; but is that spark of the higher in the Magician which wishes to unite the lower with itself."

The Oil, in this instance performs a double purpose, for it represents both the awakening of the True Self of Kundry, and the desire for her redemption. This Higher Self is represented by Parzival, and Kundry's Consecration of Parzival is the act which makes her redemption, by him, possible.

Again: "This oil is compounded of four substances. The basis of all is the oil of the olive. The Olive is, tradition-

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